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The Times before Fischer's Furniture Store. The Preventive Archaeological Researches in Sfântul Gheorghe Square 2–3, Timișoara (Timiș County)*

Dorel Micle, Bogdan Alin Craiovan, Andrei Stăvilă, Octavian-Cristian Rogoza

Abstract: Intensive archaeological researches have been performed over the last years in the center of Timișoara mainly due to edilitary and construction rehabilitation works. The present study introduces the main results of such a preventive research performed in Sfântul Gheorghe Square 2–3 that allowed us to document the habitation features over an area that is nevertheless restricted in size. The research envisaged an actual surface measuring 15 × 3.7 m. There the team has defined five habitation levels on which we have investigated archeological features, the functionality of which is related to habitation spaces, storage pits, and a water well. Among the rescued materials one notes the presence of cooking pots, jugs, tableware items, but also of a series of artifacts such as a hook-and-eye closure, a ring, an agricultural tool, a mold, and a prick spur. The materials recovered from closed complexes date the habitation in question to the period between the 15th and the 17th century, but 18th-century constructions were also identified.

Keywords: medieval habitation, medieval pottery, Ottoman Turks, preventive archaeological researches, Timișoara.

Introduction

The edilitary and construction development of the city of Timișoara over the last years has triggered ample preventive archaeological researches, mainly focused on the “Cetate” neighborhood or areas close to it, thus allowing for the reconstruction of a picture, yet incomplete, of what has been artistically labeled “the city that sleeps beneath the city”¹. Part of this context, the present article aims at presenting the main results of a preventive archaeological research performed in the summer of 2016 triggered by a rehabilitation and functionalization investment of an old building located on the northern side of Sfântul Gheorghe Square in Timișoara.

There are generally few pieces of information describing the *intramuros* habitation of the fortification of Timișoara, mainly descriptions recorded by foreign travelers to these lands, members of imperial delegations or even spies for the same Habsburg power. Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi recounts the fact that the fortification consisted of four neighborhoods with houses lacking an even architecture, “shorter or taller [...] all covered in shingles”². At the same time one finds out that the dwellings were exclusively built out of timber and just the chimneys were made of stone and that due to the restricted space inside the fortification the houses were crowded, without yards or gardens. The streets were also covered in timber, as the muddy terrain did not allow for them to be paved in stone³. Evliya Çelebi mentioned that besides the bazar, the baths, the schools, and the inns, four religious buildings also stood inside the fortification. Parts of Suleiman’s mosque were also identified archaeologically on the southern side of Sfântul Gheorghe Square.

Francesco Grisellini also speaks of medieval Timișoara, but he only describes the manner in which the city, the suburbs, or the castle were fortified, making no mention of their inner structure⁴. Unlike Grisellini, besides describing the fortifications Henirk Ottendorf also lingers on the city’s outlook that

* English translation: Ana M. Gruia.

¹ Păun 2013.

² Călători străini ... 1976, 499.

³ Călători străini ... 1976, 499.

⁴ Grisellini 2006, 108.

he finds to be decadent since “the Turks do not bother much with maintenance...”⁵. Ottendorf also mentions the fact that the streets were covered with timber that was “strong as a bridge”⁶ and that water wells existed near the houses⁷. As for the town buildings, the Bazar was located in the center, built on wooden rafters and with the roof also made of wood⁸. There is also the description of an inn with a yard, with stables on the ground floor and rooms only on the upper floor⁹. From a social perspective, one discovers that only Turks lived inside the city’s walls, as the Christians inhabited the suburbs¹⁰. Besides the information on the city, Ottendorf also describes the suburbs, the areas around them, and the religious buildings of Timișoara.

In his “Raport de observare despre cetatea Timișoara, august 1716” [Observation report on the fortification of Timișoara, August 1716], János Tutovicz, a spy working for prince Eugene of Savoy, describing the fortifications also approximates the number of its inhabitants, believing that the garrison together with the civilian inhabitants totaled ca. 10.000 people¹¹.

Besides descriptions of the city, a series of prints and maps have been preserved from those times, revealing aspects of the structure of medieval Timișoara. Such an example is the early modern map created by captain François Perrette. His “georeferenciation” indicates the intersection of four of the streets of medieval Timișoara on the researched spot, two of which, i.e. Tulips’ Lane and Saddle Maker’s Workshop Lane (Pl. 1/3) have been confirmed through archaeological researches performed on streets adjacent to the square.

Brief history of preventive researches performed in the Cetate neighborhood

Preventive archaeological researches were initiated in the historical center of the city of Timișoara in 2006. The first research was performed in “Timișoara 700” Square and it envisaged a perimeter affected by works for the sewage network¹². The modernization of the tram rails started in 2006 and has triggered the ample preventive archaeological excavations in Libertății Square, 9 Mai Street, Sfântul Gheorghe Square, and Proclamația de la Timișoara Street¹³. A small area in Eugeniu de Savoya Street 16 was also researched in 2006¹⁴.

The number of archaeological researches has greatly increased in 2013–2014, as the rehabilitation works of the historical center of Timișoara have led to the opening of numerous preventive archaeological excavation sites. During this period specialists have performed researches in Lucian Blaga¹⁵, Eugeniu de Savoya, General Praporgescu, Vasile Alecsandri, and Negru Vodă streets and in Libertății¹⁶, Țărcului, Sfântul Gheorghe, “Timișoara 700”¹⁷, and Unirii squares¹⁸. The subsequent year marked the continuation of some of the preventive researches such as those in Sfântul Gheorghe¹⁹ and Unirii squares²⁰, but also by the opening of new preventive archaeological researches in Sergent Constantin Mușat Street²¹ and the buildings of the West University (The Institute of Advanced Environmental Studies) located on Oituz Street 4²².

During this entire time, the main discoveries consisted of various public buildings such as the three mosques in Sf. Gheorghe Square, V. Alecsandri Street and Fr. Griselini Street and city’s great

⁵ Ottendorf 2006, 12.

⁶ Ottendorf 2006, 16.

⁷ Ottendorf 2006, 13.

⁸ Ottendorf 2006, 13–14.

⁹ Ottendorf 2006, 14.

¹⁰ Ottendorf 2006, 16.

¹¹ Feneșan 2014, 296–297.

¹² Drașovean *et al.* 2006.

¹³ Drașovean *et al.* 2007.

¹⁴ Tănase, Mare 2007.

¹⁵ Flutur *et al.* 2014; Hamat 2015.

¹⁶ Oprean *et al.* 2015; Micle *et al.* 2015; Vlase *et al.* 2015.

¹⁷ Bozu *et al.* 2015, 246–248.

¹⁸ Szentmiklosi *et al.* 2015, 250–251.

¹⁹ Drașovean, Suci 2016, 211–212.

²⁰ Szentmiklosi *et al.* 2016, 207–208.

²¹ Diaconescu *et al.* 2016, 208–210.

²² Gindele *et al.* 2016, 210–211.

hammam identified in Libertății Square. Between 2006 and 2016 archaeologists have also brought to light and documented several streets and alleys, made of solid wood and provided with culverts, a series of wooden dwellings with annexes, and an ingenious aqueduct made of ceramic tubes that supplied water to the public baths and the Great Mosque.

Preventive researches in Sfântul Gheorghe Square 2-3. Description of the archaeological situation

The archaeological investigations performed on the precinct of the building in Unirii Square 2-3 were triggered by the need to provide the spot with an archaeological discharge permit. The works focused on the building's inner courtyard that was about to be rehabilitated and the perimeter was taken over at the depth quota of -1.3 m compared to the present-day ground level.

The research of the man-made depositions was performed through five artificial excavation planes that have revealed 75 archaeological complexes the function of which varies on a case-to-case basis. The researched area was very small, measuring 15 m in length and only 3.7 m in width, delimited by modern buildings that belonged to the construction undergoing the renovation. At the same time, in-depth modern interventions have not allowed us to document the general stratigraphy of the area over an acceptable length. Archaeologists have only identified short segments that rather illustrate the stratigraphy of certain complexes and not the general situation. As for the archaeological complexes that became apparent in the five excavation planes, they can be grouped according to their function in the following categories: dwellings, a water well, and storage pits.

The archaeological complexes that can be interpreted as habitation areas were the most numerous (C.7, C.30, C.40, C.51, C.58, C.62 and C.66). Two types of dwellings were noted on the site according to their general characteristics: ground dwellings and pit-houses. There were generally few elements indicating ground dwellings, i.e. adobe platforms and foundation ditches preserving successions of post holes or wooden structures.

The first ground dwelling (C.7) was documented in the north-eastern corner of the section. It became apparent as a layer of adobe, rubbly in structure, measuring up to 20 cm in thickness. The larger pieces of adobe preserved imprints of wattle and this indicates the fact that they were once part of the house's wall structure. The dimensions of this dwelling cannot be established precisely as the northern and eastern sides of the complex had been destroyed by the foundations of modern constructions. The floor of the dwelling, made of wooden planks placed one beside the other, has been preserved under the layer of adobe, but one cannot state the manner in which the planks had been connected to each other due to their poor state of preservation (Pl. 2/1). The supra-structure of the dwelling rested on wooden posts and traces of it were identified on the southern side. There the archaeologists have documented the foundation ditch of one of the walls (Pl. 2/1) that preserved five post holes with diameters measuring between 0.3 and 0.48 m and the depths between 0.3 and 0.5 m.

Another ground dwelling (Pl. 3) was also identified in excavation plane 1, but its traces were in a poor state of preservation and, furthermore, the complex had been cut by a Habsburg lime pit (Pl. 7/7-8). Even so, the dwelling's perimeter was clearly delimited on three of its sides by massive wooden posts with the diameters measuring between 0.5 and 0.6 m. Their implantation holes were also visible around the posts, measuring up to 0.9 m in diameter. The structure thus delimited was also different through what was preserved from the imprint of the dwelling, consisting of a 4-5 cm thick layer of organic matter (vegetal remains), contrasting against the compact gray clay specific to the culture layer. Two wooden board fragments were documented on the dwelling's imprint in the south-western corner, though archaeologists were unable to decide if they were traces of a possible floor or part of the dwelling's walls. From the perspective of planimetry, the dwelling was rectangular, with the identified maximum dimensions of 3.4 × 2.2 m.

In the second excavation plane, still in the north-eastern corner of the section, specialists have also researched an adobe platform, also preserved fragmentarily (C.30), indicating the presence of a ground dwelling. Archaeologists were unable to connect it to possible traces that could indicate the construction manner of its supra-structure. The adobe fragment was preserved to 10-14 cm in thickness and in the western area the team has identified two planks measuring 10-20 cm in width,

fragmentarily preserved. The adobe platform, affected by modern interventions, shows an extension of only 1.8×1.8 m (Pl. 2/2–3).

To the category of ground dwellings one can also connect a series of wooden structures (C.40, C.48, C.52) that were most likely part of the walls of such constructions. A representative complex that can be included in this category was identified in the third excavation plane (▼-2.5–2.6 m). It consisted of a structure (C.48) made of 11 wooden planks placed vertically; the preserved length of the first six planks measured between 0.5 and 0.7 m, while the others were longer, between 0.9 and 1.1 m. In the case of the first group of boards their bases had been cut straight and they were supported by a perpendicularly placed board that measured 0.3×1.1 m. The second group of boards had sharp bases so that they could be implanted in the ground, as no other support element was present. The entire structure was fixed in the ground with ditches excavated on both sides. The identified ditches measured 0.3×1 m and had the maximum depth of 0.10–0.12 m (Pl. 2/4–6).

Another wooden structure that represents the wall of a dwelling was documented in excavation plane 4 (▼-2.6–2.9 m), in the eastern side of the trench. The structure had been largely destroyed by a septic tank belonging to the present-day building. The main structure of the wall consisted of tree trunks rectangular in profile, varying in thickness between 20 and 30 cm, connected through T-shaped joints. This structure once supported the wall made of planks measuring 20 cm in width and between 5 and 10 cm in thickness (Pl. 7/1–4). The documentation of the construction was conditioned by its poor state of preservation, as subsequent interventions have largely destroyed the structure.

Pit-houses generally featured in the lower levels (excavations planes 4–5, i.e. between the depth of -2.6 and -3.1 m) of the medieval habitation.

One of the pit-houses researched there (C.51a) has been identified in excavation plane 4 through the clayish black-grey fill that contrasted against the culture layer through its dark color with bluish spots (Pl. 4/1–2). In its turn, the dwelling was cut by a pit, probably a household refuse pit (C.51), individualized through its brown fill. In this case as well archaeologists have only found the western half of the complex, as the rest of it was destroyed by the wall of the current building's basement. The dwelling was rectangular with rounded corners, deeper by 0.96 m than the level of identification, with the preserved dimensions of 1.92×1.5 m. On all three sides the dwelling preserved a packed clay step measuring ca. 0.2 m in width, found at the depth of -0.5 m.

Another pit-house (C.58) was researched on the last plane, at the depth of -3.1 m. It was rectangular in shape and had been affected on two sides by complexes from the subsequent layers (C.52, C.53 or C.57). The dwelling was rectangular with rounded corners and continued 0.8 m below the level of identification; its preserved dimensions were 2.5×2.4 m. No post hole has been found inside the dwelling, thus the roof's support structure was probably located on the outside, but its elements have not yet been discovered. The fill of this complex was homogenous, compact, brown in color, consisting of a mix of vegetal remains and wood, indicating the fact that after being taken out of use the feature has been used employed as a household refuse pit (Pl. 4/3–5).

Another pit-house (C.66b) was found on the southern side of the section, mostly in the general profile; the ground preserved one third of its surface at most. We cannot make any estimates on this dwelling's dimensions, only noting the fact that it was 1 m deeper than the level of identification and thus matching the coordinates of the other pit-houses found on the site. The fill of the complex consisted of layers made of the same organic material identified in the case of the other dwellings described above, alternating with layers of brown clay and compact texture. The western side of the dwelling has been affected by the foundations of the modern building and, even more, its layers were compressed in a fifteenth-sixteenth-century pit located on the same side (Pl. 4/6–7).

Unfortunately, modern interventions and the limits of the researched area have most often not allowed for the uncovering of built complexes, but rather of fragments of habitation structures in this area of the medieval city of Timișoara. Aspects of habitation in the area have also been documented during researches performed in 2006 along the tram rail crossing Sfântul Gheorghe Square, 9 Mai Street, reaching Libertății Square²³. On the basis of the architectural peculiarities documented in the

²³ Drașovean *et al.* 2007.

square specialists were able to identify three habitation levels²⁴, the third being the most recent and, at the same time, ending medieval habitation.

Attempting to correlate our researches with the discoveries made along the present-day track of the rail one notes the fact that the structures we have identified while removing excavation plane 5 (▼-3.1 m) that became apparent against the archaeological sterile were not identified in the square as well²⁵. This plane is characterized by the exclusive presence of pit-houses and storage pits and the identified archaeological material can be dated to the fifteenth-sixteenth century. The oldest buildings with the structure above ground level only feature in excavation plane 4, i.e. at the depth of -2.6-2.9 m. In Sfântul Gheorghe Square habitation plane I was defined at this depth, by documenting a structure made of wooden planks measuring 6 cm in thickness, bordered by beams measuring 0.25 cm in thickness²⁶, representing the wall of a dwelling. In the areas east and west of the square specialists have also researched constructions erected on wooden soles (S.1), a street design, and a mill (S.2)²⁷. In our case, the only identified structural elements were rows of wooden posts, sharpened at the base and thrust into the ground or implanted through the excavation of posts. We note the fact that no clear building perimeters became apparent. Part of the wooden posts documented at this level had significant diameters, around 0.3-0.35 m. The materials recovered from this level can also be dated to the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. Sporadically, there were also later pottery fragments, but such elements were found in secondary positions.

Habitation level II defined in the square included the wooden structure of a house²⁸, corresponding to plane 3 in the perimeter excavated by us both from the perspective of depth (▼-2.2-2.6 m) and from the perspective of the researched structures. In this level archaeologists have documented wooden structures belonging to dwelling wall parts found in natural positions or collapsed. To the subsequent plane (▼-1.8-2.2 m), where the water well (C.34) was researched in our perimeter, correspond the pits of the necropolis in the square. This necropolis belonged to the Great Mosque and Street III, continuing with a layer in which the most recent tombs in the area were researched, in their turn overlapped by layers of debris attributed to the eighteenth-century town planning renovation²⁹. One thus notes the fact that in the square medieval habitation ends and the upper layers belong to the modern redesigns of the city.

Through our research, the most recent medieval dwellings were researched in plane 1 (▼-1.3-1.8 m), becoming apparent as adobe platforms, with the floors covered with wooden planks or wooden posts placed in rows and implanted on the bottom of pits or ditches. If this level has been destroyed in Sfântul Gheorghe Square, buildings like those that we have identified in this final plane were researched in the sections adjacent to the Square on 9 Mai Street and Libertății Square, forming there habitation level III³⁰. Three wooden construction phases were also identified during the research on Lucian Blaga Street. Archaeologists have noted there the fact that the successive renovations of certain buildings took into account the street network that remained unchanged throughout the period of Ottoman rule³¹. Dwellings were also identified in Palanca Mare, all of them of the pit-house type, but comparing them to those that we have researched is a bit far-fetched due to the chronological position of the discoveries of this type in the western part of "Timișoara 700" Square³².

The storage of foodstuffs was made, during the habitation stages documented here, in storage pits, features mostly identified in the final excavation plane, at the depth of -3.1 m from the current court yard level. The pits had round openings and the maximum diameter varied between 1 m and 1.5 m. Once their fills were excavated, archaeologists were able to observe the fact that in depth the pits also preserved their opening shape and that they went down to 1.5 m from the level of identification, though there were exceptions, consisting of pits measuring -0.9-1 m in maximum depth. In general, the fill of the complexes consisted of successive layers of soil and organic matter, the latter a

²⁴ Drașovean *et al.* 2007, 79-84.

²⁵ Drașovean *et al.* 2007, 79.

²⁶ Drașovean *et al.* 2007, 65.

²⁷ Drașovean *et al.* 2007, 80.

²⁸ Drașovean *et al.* 2007, 63.

²⁹ Drașovean *et al.* 2007, 62.

³⁰ Drașovean *et al.* 2007, 82-83.

³¹ Flutur *et al.* 2014, 230-234; Hamat 2015, 540.

³² Szentmiklosi, Balarie 2012, 208.

mix of vegetal remains and the stones of different fruits, mainly cherries. Except for the usual finds (pottery, bone fragments) two of the storage pits have revealed a brass ring and a hook-and-eye clasp made of the same material.

The 2006 research in the Square and on its adjacent streets and the much more recent research on Lucian Blaga Street have not led to the identification of complexes the function of which can be connected to that of storage pits, but a series of such features were researched in the medieval neighborhood of Palanca Mare, allowing for a basic classification³³. Thus, according to the criteria, the complexes that we have interpreted as storage pits can be included in type I.

A public building was identified in the second excavation plane, starting at the depth of -2.1 m from the current level of the inner courtyard. The function of this complex is connected to that of a water well (C.34). The complex is characterized by a rectangular-shaped mouth and a rectangular shape in depth as well. The water well is characterized by a depth of -2.6 m from the level of identification, a width of 1.3 m and a length of 1.8 m. After the well was taken out of use, the pit was used for trash disposal. The fill consists of 23 layers, among which four compact layers of stones from the fruits of various species, in general predominantly cherries (Pl. 6/1). In the upper part the pit had been strengthened with a wooden wall that has not been preserved down to the bottom. Four tree trunks had been used for the construction of the wall, with an average thickness of 15 cm, with T-shaped joints at the ends and with iron and wooden nails. In order for the four trunks to be implanted, the pit has been enlarged in the four corners. On this supporting structure the upper part of the wall was "lined" with 26 planks with the average dimensions of 0.24 m × 1.3 m and the thickness varying between 5 and 7 cm. Only the corner planks proved to be more massive. Posts were preserved in the NE and SW corners, measuring 1.2 m in length and 0.1 m in diameter, aimed at supporting the corner planks. For fastening, the lower part of each plank had been tapered (Pl. 6/2–6).

Water wells with walls only present in the upper part of the pit were only researched in Palanca Mare, included in type II, with variants also defined according to their peculiarities³⁴. The only similarity between the water well researched here and those in Palanca Mare is the presence of the wall only in the upper part of the well, as they are very different morphologically in depth.

Medieval habitation on the spot of "Piața Sfântul Gheorghe nr. 2–3" ended with the first modern designs, specific to the eighteenth century, documented there through two complexes (C.1 and C.16), representing an alley and a lime pit (Pl. 7/7–8). The alley was made of fragmentary roof tiles placed perpendicular to the ground, flanked by curbs consisting of three rows of bricks, placed depth-wise, unconnected to each other (Pl. 7/5–6).

A postcard published by Polatsek Bookstore and dated August 21st 1903, illustrating Sfântul Gheorghe Square in the dawn of the 20th century shows that the ground floor of the building the courtyard of which is the spot of the preventive archaeological research under discussion, hosted at that time several stores among which Fischer's Furniture Store or Warehouse (Butorraktár FISCHER JAC. M[...])³⁵. Unfortunately, the quality of the postcard does not allow for the identification of other elements that might provide information on the function of the entire ground floor.

Archaeological material

As expected, pottery was the largest lot of all discovered artifacts. From the perspective of pot uses, one can reconstruct pots from the following categories: cooking pots, storage pots, and tableware items. Among these categories, the largest proportion was that of cooking pots, with different shape variations, followed by jugs, bowls, and dishes.

The rims of cooking-type pots follow closely the era's standards, as they are flared, sometimes strongly flared, and rounded. A single item has the rim cut straight (Pl. 8/3). Some of the rims have a lid support border on the inside (Pl. 8/3; Pl. 9/1–3) and an outer groove, placed right under the rim's edge (Pl. 8/5; Pl. 9/1–3). One of these pots displays an interesting peculiarity, i.e. the rim is cut straight and under it one notes a strongly wavy girdle. At the same time this is the only cooking pot with handle out of all recovered items (Pl. 8/2).

³³ Szentmiklosi, Balarie 2012, 210.

³⁴ Szentmiklosi, Balarie 2012, 211.

³⁵ <https://gallery.hungaricana.hu/en/VendeglatoKepeslap/2997/?img=0> (accessed 29.05.2017).

The fabric used in the making of the cooking pots is of very good quality, well mixed and entirely tampered with fine sand and large-grain sand. The majority of the pots in this category have gone through reduction firing, with the exception of a single item with oxidation firing, thus orange in color (Pl. 8/3). The color of the pots with reduction firing varies from black to gray due to the thermic treatment they have been subjected to. Traces of secondary firing and remains of calcined organic matter, the latter often on the outer walls of the pots, are also present in the case of cooking pots. Calcined remains of organic matter were also found inside a pot and ca. 70% of the inner surface of this item was covered in such remains (Pl. 8/3). The most often encountered decoration on pots from this category consists of grooves, placed on the shoulders in parallel lines (Pl. 8/4,6-7; Pl. 9/3) or on the area of maximum circumference (Pl. 8/2). A single pot is decorated with incisions parallel to each other placed on the shoulder. The same item also displays painted decoration in the second row, consisting of brown-orange dots placed in zigzags (Pl. 8/3).

Taking into consideration the morphological characteristics of the fabric, the clay processing technique (modeled on the fast or on the slow-turning potters' wheel), the profile of the rim and the type of decoration, one can chronologically place these cooking pots during the sixteenth century (Pl. 8/3), the period of the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries (Pl. 8/1,4,6,7; Pl. 9/1,3), and that of the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries (Pl. 8/2, 5; Pl. 9/2).

Lids are also present in the ceramic inventory (Pl. 10/4-5). They were made of semi-coarse fabric, tampered with large-grain sand and sometimes pebbles, with both reduction and oxidation firing. A single item was decorated with painted stripes using a white-color pigment (Pl. 10/5).

The category of tableware items includes shapes such as bowls (Pl. 10/2-3) and dishes (Pl. 10/1). In the first group inside the tableware category one notes the presence of glazed bowls; the outer glaze color varies from brown-red to green and yellow, while the inside is most often glazed using colors such as green or yellow. As for the dishes, they are made of kaolin-based fabric and are glazed. The most often encountered decoration in the case of this type of pots is painting, rendering floral or geometric motifs. Pigments of various colors were used, ranging from green-yellow to blue-cobalt blue (Pl. 10/1). Both types of pots described above are specific to the 16th-17th centuries.

The tableware category also includes cups made of fabric tampered with fine sand, modeled on the fast-turning potters' wheel, and having one handle (Pl. 10/8-9). One of these cups is decorated with grooves parallel to each other and placed right under the rim and at the base of the pots. Grooves also feature as waves, placed in the second row, on the area of maximum circumference. At the same time, the rim is provided with a strongly wavy girdle. This type of artifacts is mainly characteristic to the period of the 16th-17th centuries (Pl. 10/9). In the category of food serving objects one can also include a wooden spoon discovered in C.34, with a total length of 0.16 m. Its handle is round in section, preserving 0.1 m in length and curved as compared to a flat plane. The meeting area between handle and bowl displays alveoli on both sides. The leaf of the spoon was fragmentarily preserved, measuring 6 cm in length and 1.5 cm in the area of maximum width (Pl. 11/5).

During the research archaeologists have also identified one strainer fragment (Pl. 10/6), globular in shape, with circular orifices, with the upper part slightly prolonged. The item was made of fine fabric, glazed, gray in color. Such items can be chronologically set during the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century.

An important pottery category consists of jugs. This type of pots is specific to the Late Middle Ages, i.e. the 15th-16th centuries, introduced by the Ottomans to the area under discussion here. The most often encountered shape is the so-called candle holder, with a narrow neck and bulging body, with one handle (Pl. 9/4, 6-7,9). In the case of these jugs the most frequent decoration consists of grooves placed under the rim, on the neck or on the shoulder. Another type of jug has a wide and grooved rim, bulging body, and a slightly narrow neck (Pl. 9/8).

Pottery materials matching the typological categories described above have also been discovered in Timișoara, in the precinct of the Huniade Castle³⁶, on 9 Mai Street³⁷, Lucian Blaga Street³⁸, and in Sf. Gheorghe Square³⁹.

³⁶ Rădulescu 2006, 28; Rădulescu *et al.* 2007, 145.

³⁷ Drașovean *et al.* 2006, 124-126.

³⁸ Flutur *et al.* 2014, 235.

³⁹ Drașovean *et al.* 2006, 125.

An extremely interesting item consists of the upper part of a Loštice-type cup (Pl. 10/7). This type of pottery is specific to the Central European area, mainly used during the period of the 14th–16th centuries⁴⁰. These were made of low-quality fabric, tampered with sand and pebbles, the outer surface brown with nuances of mauve. A special firing technique was employed during the production process that made the glaze on the pot's surface explode, leading to the formation of tiny bubbles that rendered the surface a grained texture. Loštice-type pots have slender shapes and are provided with between 6 and 10 small handles placed under the rim. Loštice-type discoveries are specific to Bohemia, from where they subsequently spread to the present-day Czech lands, Slovakia and Hungary. In Romania such finds have been noted in Frumușeni “Mănăstirea Bizere” (Arad County) and Cristuru-Secuiesc⁴¹. Due to its context of discovery, the fragment presented here can be dated to the 15th century.

Among the discoveries one must also mention a mold (Pl. 11/4). The item is made of sandstone with the preserved length of 5.2 cm and the width of 4.4 cm. In the central part, along the mold's length, one notes a channel for casting a sharp object and a series of veins can be seen on both sides of it. Unfortunately, due to the fragmentary preservation of the mold, we were unable to identify acceptable analogies.

As for the inventory of metal-made artifacts, it consists of an agricultural tool, a spur, and a knife. The agricultural implement consists of the metal part of an iron hoe, preserved in good conditions. As for its dimensions, the active part measures 0.23 m in length and 0.15 m in width and the socketing shaft measures 5.2 cm in length and 3 cm in width (Pl. 11/7).

From a typological perspective, the spur is of the prick type (Pl. 11/3). Only one of the two arms preserves its original proportions and the strap orifice that allowed for the spur to be attached to the boot, the orifice itself is positioned in the median section of the arm, which is rather unusual for this type of spur. The prick's length, which is considerably longer than the standard length of a prick type spur, together with the position of the strap orifice, helps us date this artefact in the late middle ages period, to be precise, the 16th–17th centuries. Unfortunately, the lack of satisfying analogies keeps us from revealing more useful information regarding this artefact.

Another item part of the metal-made artifact lot is a knife, in a good state of preservation, displaying both the blade and the wooden handle (Pl. 11/6). The blade is only sharp on one side, slightly curved towards the tip, measuring 9 cm in length and 1.5 cm in width. The wooden handle is attached to the blade with copper rivets placed on both sides of the handle. The copper applique from the end of the handle has also been preserved and it is almond-shaped. According to Zsuzsanna Kopeczny's classification⁴², this item is to be included in the category of lamellar handle blades type IIa.

The category of jewelry items consists in this lot of a ring (Pl. 11/2), hot-hammered out of brass, with an outer diameter of 2.9 cm, an inner diameter of 2.5 cm, and measuring 0.2 cm in thickness. Due to the artifact's state of degradation one cannot observe other characteristics that might help determine its function and dating. Among the dress accessories one notes a hook-and-eye clasp made of brass wire that is rectangular in section and measures 0.1 cm in thickness. Both the eye and the hook are simple and the characteristics of the items suggest that it was used as a dress accessory. Such items could have also been used as shoe or belt accessories, as their aspect was common and standardized. This also makes their dating general to the period between the fourteenth and the 18th century⁴³. The archaeological context in which the item was discovered dates it to the 15th–16th centuries.

Conclusions

Through its discoveries, the present research contributes to a certain degree to the completion of a general picture of medieval habitation in this area of Timișoara. The oldest man-made traces on the site consist of the prick spur dated to the 11th–13th centuries, but its secondary position in C.66c renders it useless as a dating element of the complex. As for the habitation structures, the team has been able to date the earliest level to the period of the 15th–16th centuries, consisting only of sunken structures. During the same period one can also date the first dwellings with the supporting structure

⁴⁰ Bencze 2007, 90.

⁴¹ Bencze 2007, 90.

⁴² Kopeczny 2016, 394–396.

⁴³ Demjén, Ardeleanu 2014, 66.

placed above ground level and supported on wooden posts rammed or thrust into the ground with the aid of implantation pits. We have corroborated these later constructions to the first habitation level defined during the research performed along the tram rails, a level that can be dated with precision to the 16th century due to a hoard the accumulation period of which ends in 1565–1566⁴⁴. The other levels where dwellings or other elements of human habitat were identified can be dated during the 16th–17th centuries. Medieval habitation was interrupted by the 18th century modern interventions identified on ground plan 1.

Space limitations inside the city are obvious and they have also been identified inside the researched area. Structures belonging to two or even three dwellings were often documented on the same plane over the investigated surface of 65 m². At the same time the research confirms the written sources on the city's lack of architectural unity, as the team has documented a series of wooden posts that indicate, through their dimensions, the existence of constructions with an upper floor. Such posts alternated with the walls of dwellings or smaller wooden posts that belonged, through their characteristics, to single-storey houses.

In conclusion, the results of the archaeological researches in Sfântul Gheorghe Square 2–3 are but a small part of what the medieval city of Timișoara once was. Far from creating a complete picture, the archaeological discoveries presented here are significant, among other things, through the fact that relatively few areas unaffected by modern constructions can be found in central area of the city. Thus, the identification of vestiges dated before the 18th century can represent a unique and non-recurring opportunity for the city's history.

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⁴⁴ Drașovean et al. 2006, 81, 234.

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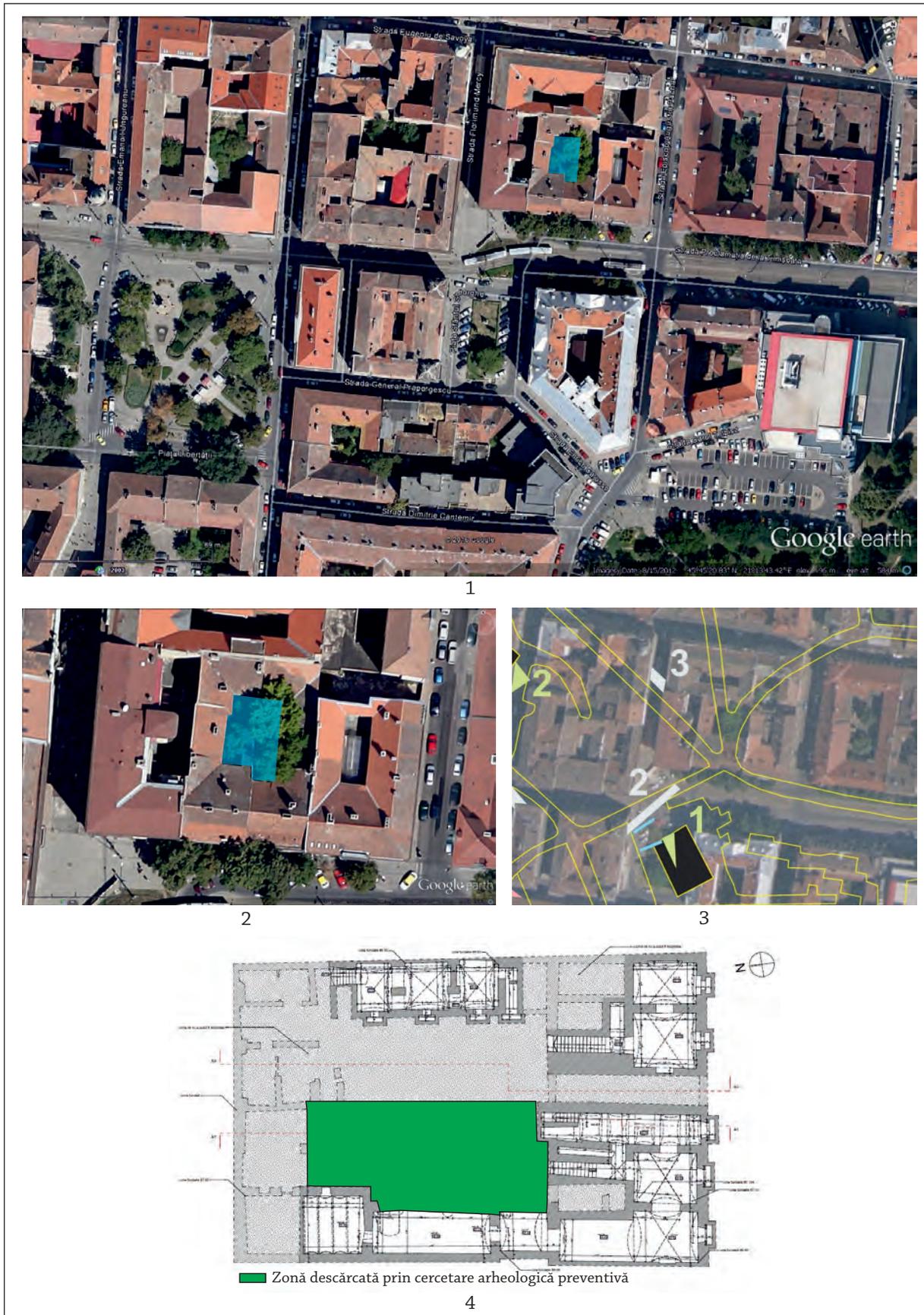


Plate 1. 1-2: Satellite image of the perimeter affected by the archaeological excavations and its surrounding area; 3: Detail of satellite image with an overlapping of the Perrette map and the location of the archaeological discoveries in Sfântul Gheorghe Square and its proximity; 4: Ground plan of the building the perimeter of which has been researched through preventive archaeology and released an archaeological discharge.



Plate 2. 1-3: Structures belonging to ground dwellings (Feature 7; Feature 30); 4-6: On-site aspects regarding the wall of a ground dwelling (Feature 48).

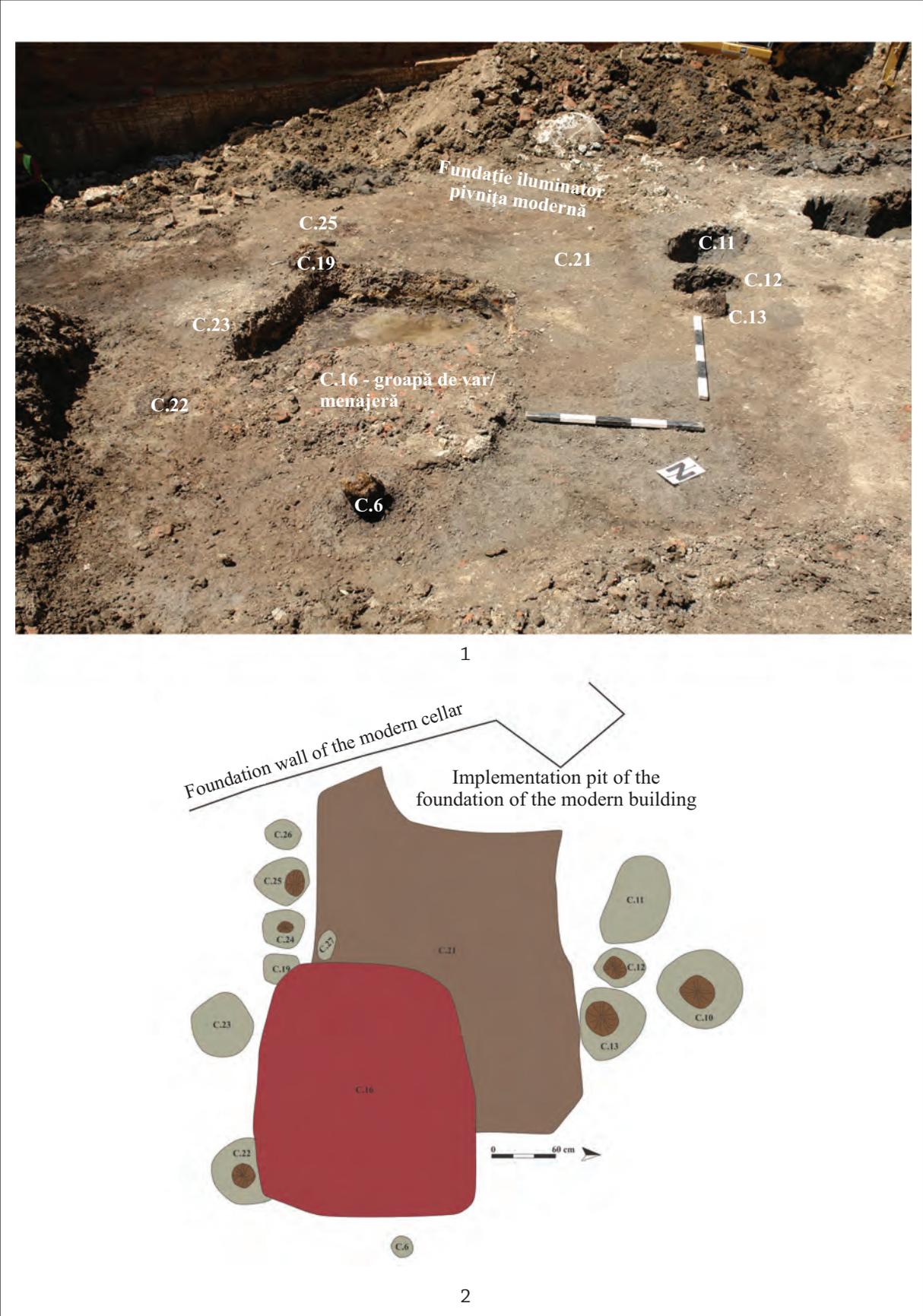


Plate 3. Ground dwelling identified in excavation plane 1 (Feature 21) and the modern lime pit (Feature 16).



Plate 4. Pit-houses researched on this site: 1-2. Feature 51; 3-5. Feature 58; 6. Southern profile of the area (C.66b – C. 66c); 7. On-site image of the ground in features 66b and 66c.

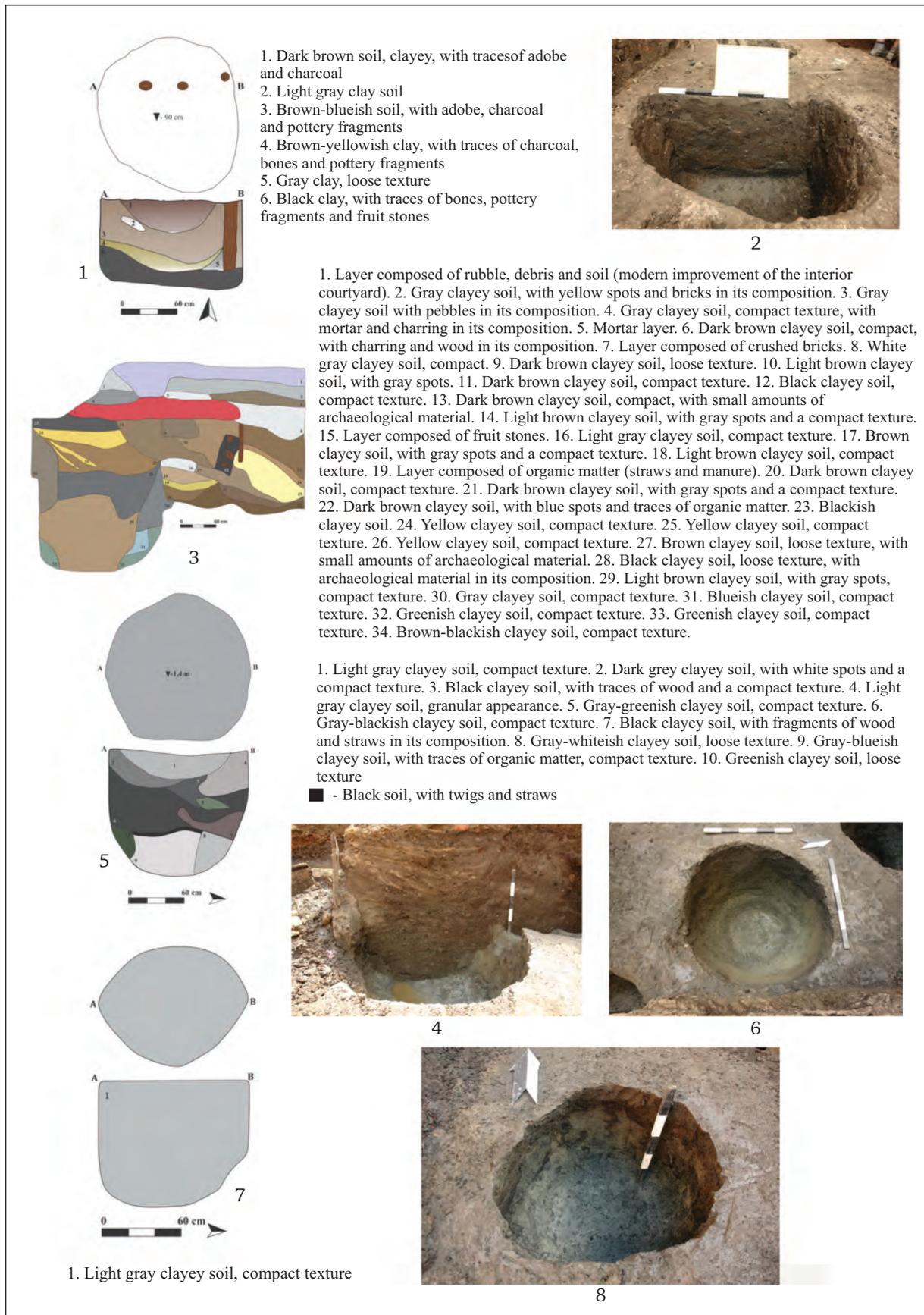


Plate 5. Storage pits researched on this site: 1-2. Feature 30; 3-4. Feature 53; 5-4. Feature 55; 7-8. Feature 59.

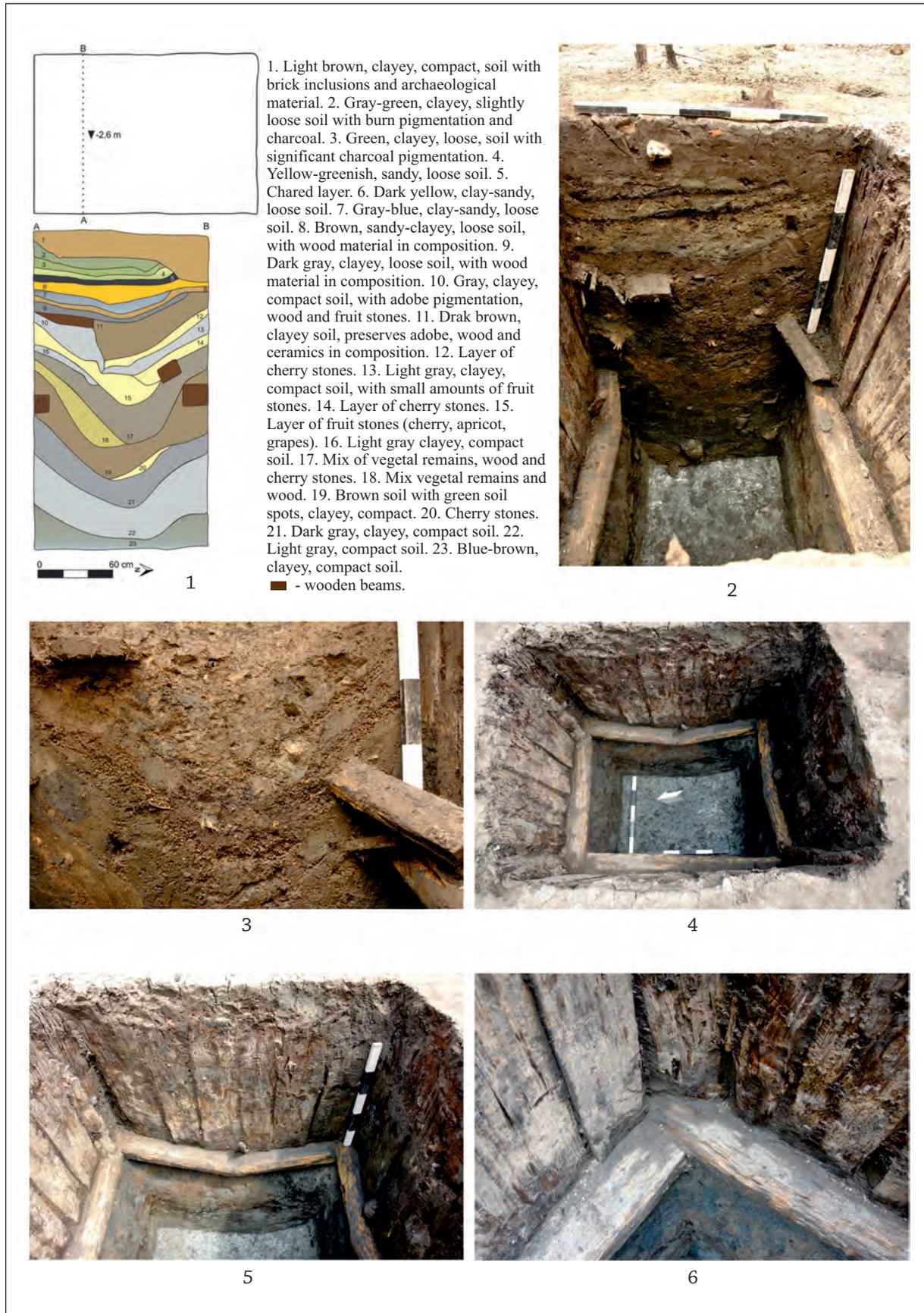


Plate 6. Stratigraphy and on-site aspect of the water well C. 34).



Plate 7. 1-4: Wall of a ground dwelling (C.52); 5-8: Modern Era complexes.

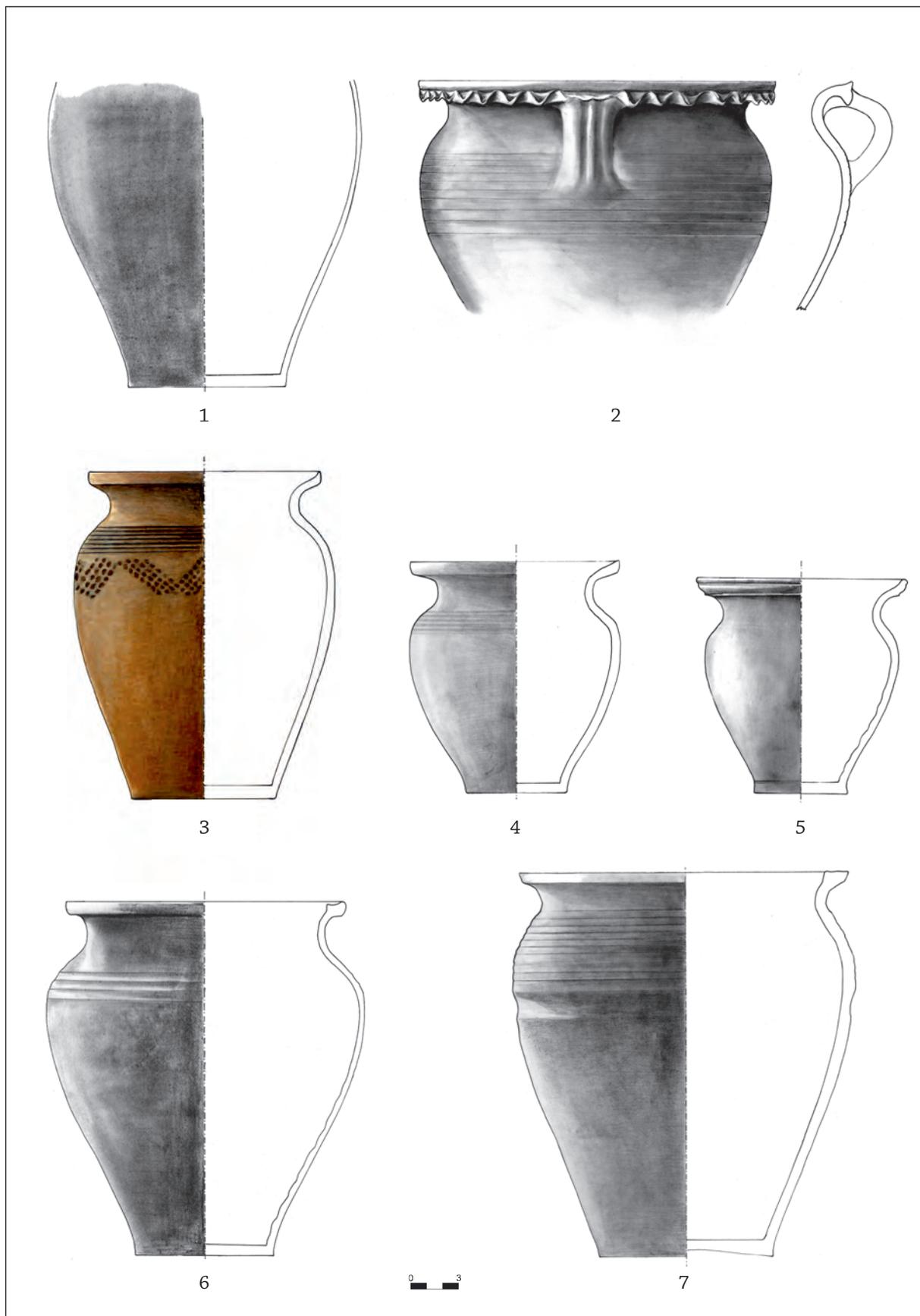


Plate 8. Types of cooking pots identified during the research. 1-5: Complex 34; 6: Complex 51; 7: Complex 66c.



Plate 9. 1-3: Types of cooking pots (Complex 59); 4-9: Jugs and jug parts (4-Complex 34; 5-Complex 16; 6-Complex 58; 7-Complex 59; 8-Complex 34; 9-Complex 53).

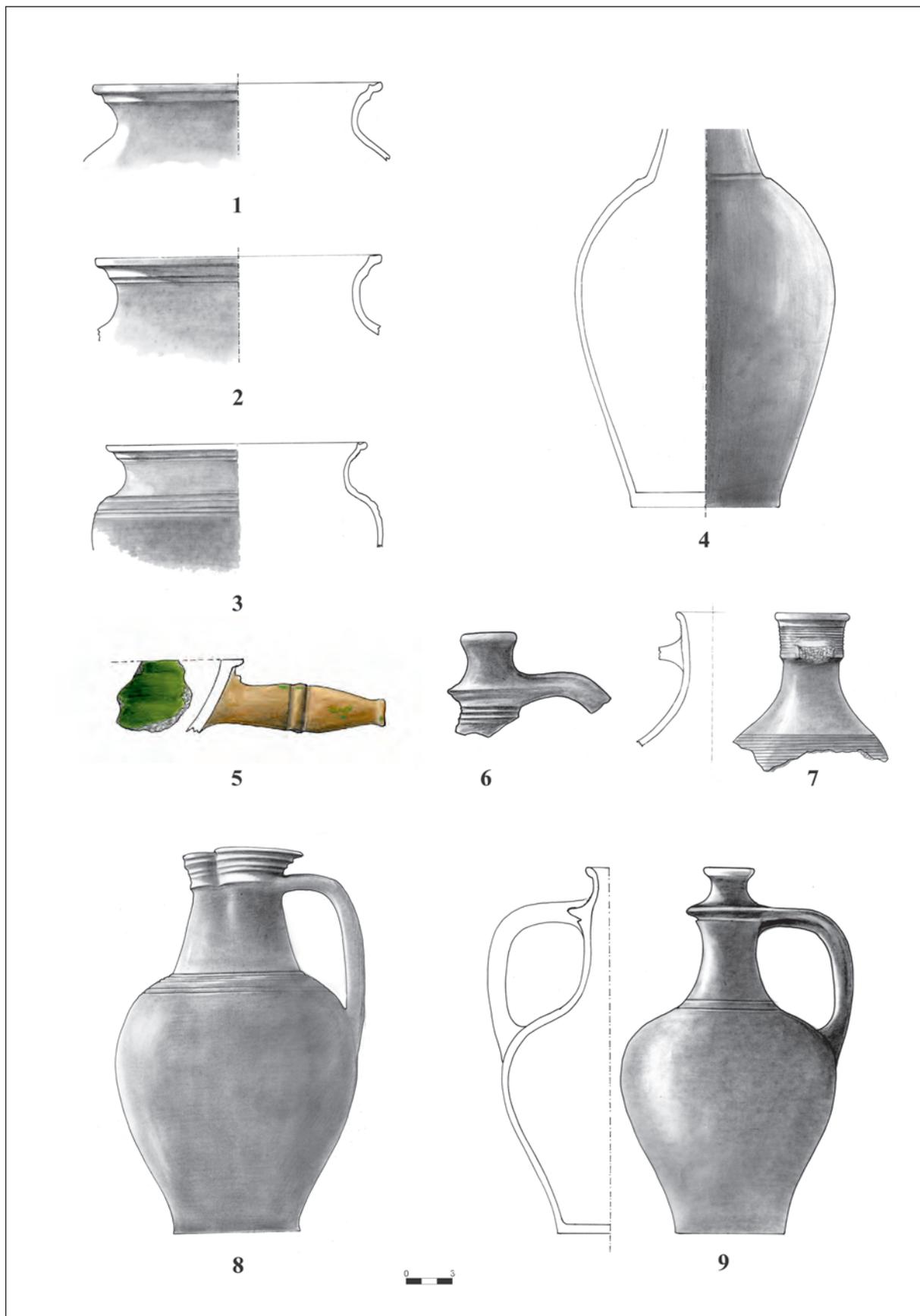


Plate 10. 1: Dish (Complex 31); 2-3: Tureens (Complexes 16 and 58); 4-5: Lids (Complexes 58 and 16); 6: Strainer fragment (Complex 2); 7: Lostițe-type cup (Complex 53); 8-9: Glass types (Complex 66).

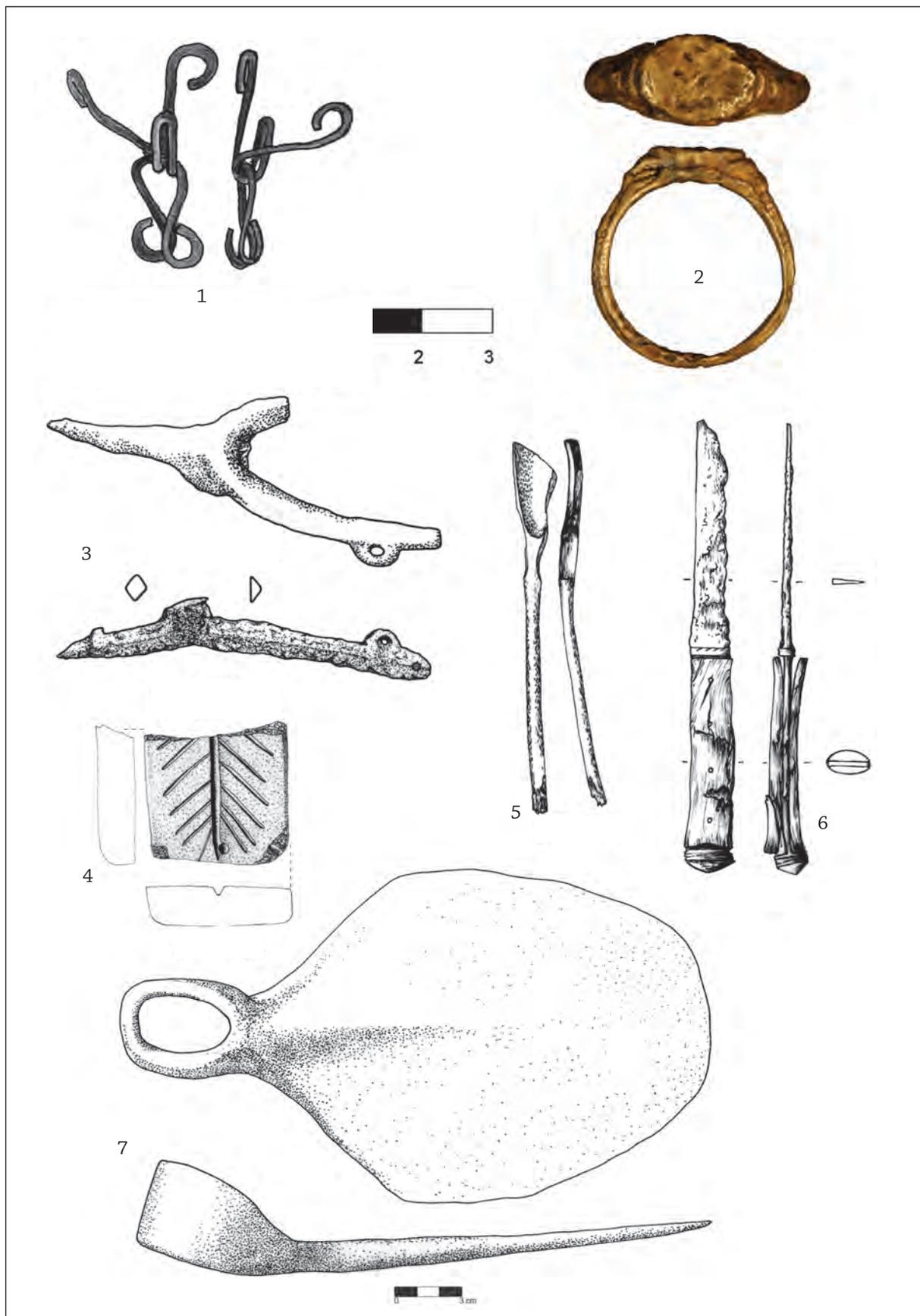


Plate 11. 1: Hook-and-eye type closure (Complex 53); 2: Ring (Complex 30); 3: Prick spur (Complex 66c); 4: Mold (Complex 54) 5: Wooden spoon (Complex 34); 6-Knife with the blade sharp on one side; 7: Agricultural tool – the active part of a hoe (Complex 66c).

Abbreviations

AAASH	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae. Budapest.
Acta Ant et Arch Suppl	Acta Antiqua et Archaeologica Supplementum. Szeged.
AAC	Acta Archaeologica Carpathica. Krakow.
ACMIT	Anuarul Comisiunii monumentelor istorice. Secția pentru Transilvania. Cluj.
ARA	Annual Review of Anthropology. Stanford.
ActaArchHung	ActaArchHung Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae. Budapest.
AEM	Archäologische Epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich-Ungarn. Heidelberg.
AIIA Cluj	Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie. Cluj-Napoca.
AISC	Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice. Cluj-Napoca.
AMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis. Zalău.
ATF	Acta Terrae Fogarasiensis. Făgăraș.
ATS	Acta Terrae Septemcastrenses. Sibiu.
Agria	Agria. Annales Musei Agriensis. Az egri Dobó István Vármúzeum évkönyve. Eger.
AnB S.N.	Analele Banatului. Timișoara.
AMS.CEU	Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU. Budapest.
ACN	Archaeological Computing Newsletter. Florence.
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő. A Magyar Régészeti és Művészettörténeti Társulat tudományos folyóirata. Budapest.
ArchJug	Archaeologia Iugoslavica. Beograd.
ArhPregled	Arheološki Pregled. Arheološko Društvo Jugoslavije. Beograd.
ArchSlovCat	Archaeologia Slovaca Catalogi. Bratislava.
Archaeológiai Közlemények	Archaeológiai Közlemények. A hazai Műemlékek Ismeretének Előmozdítására. Budapest.
ArchKorr	Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt. Mainz.
ArhMold	Arheologia Moldovei. Iași.
AMN	Acta Musei Napocensis. Cluj-Napoca.
AMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis. Zalău.
ArchRozhl	Archeologické Rozhledy. Praga.
ArhMed	Arheologia Medievală. Cluj-Napoca, Brăila, Reșița.
ASMB	Arheologia Satului Medieval din Banat. Reșița 1996.
AVSL	Auftrage des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde, Wien.
Banatica	Banatica. Reșița.
BAM	Brvkenthal Acta Musei. Sibiu.
BAR Int. Ser.	British Archaeological Reports. International Series. Oxford.
BCMI	Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice. București.
BCȘS	Buletinul Cercurilor Științifice Studentești. Arheologie – Istorie – Muzeologie. Alba Iulia.
BG	Botanical Guidebooks. Kraków.
BerRGK	Bericht der RömischGermanischen Kommission. Frankfurt a. Main.
BHAB	Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Banatica. Timișoara.
BHAUT	Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Universitatis Timisiensis. Timișoara.
BMB. SH	Biblioteca Muzeului Bistrița. Seria Historica. Bistrița Năsăud.
BMÉ	Bihari Múzeum Évkönyve. Berettyóújfalu.
BMI	Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice. București.
BMN	Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis. Cluj-Napoca.
BMMK	A Békés Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei. Békéscsaba.
BMMN	Buletinul Muzeului Militar Național. București.
BThr	Bibliotheca Thracologica. Institutul Român de Tracologie. București.

CAB	Cercetări Arheologice în București. București.
CAH	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae. Budapest.
Carpica	Carpica. Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Arheologie, Bacău.
CAMNI	Cercetări Arheologice. Muzeul de Istorie al R. S. România/Muzeul Național de Istorie. București.
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> . Berlin.
CCA	<i>Cronica cercetărilor arheologice (din România)</i> , 1983-1992 <i>sqq.</i> (și în variantă electronică pe http://www.cimec.ro/scripts/arh/cronica/cercetariarh.asp).
Classica et Christiana	Classica et Christiana. Iasi.
CRSCRCR	Coins from Roman sites and collections of Roman coins from Romania. Cluj-Napoca.
Crisia	Crisia. Muzeul Țării Crișurilor, Oradea.
Dacia N.S.	Dacia. Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne. Nouvelle serie. București.
Danubius	Danubius - Revista Muzeului de Istorie Galati. Galați.
DDME	A Debreceni Déri Múzeum Évkönyve. Debrecen.
DolgCluj	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Nemzeti Érem- és Régiségtárából, Klozsvár (Cluj).
DolgSzeg	Dolgozatok. Arbeiten des Archäologischen Instituts der Universität. Szeged.
EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis. Cluj-Napoca.
EMEÉ	Az Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület Évkönyve. Cluj-Napoca.
EMÉ	Erdélyi Múzeum Évkönyve. Cluj-Napoca.
EAZ	Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift. Berlin.
FADDP/GMADP	Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Dacia Porolissensis/Ghid al monumentelor arheologice din Dacia Porolissensis. Zalău.
File de Istorie	File de Istorie. Bistrița.
FolArch	Folia Archaeologica. Budapest.
Forsch. u. Ber. z. Vor- u. Frühgesch. BW	Forschungen und Berichte zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Baden-Württemberg.
GPSKV	Gradja za proučavanje spomenika kulture Vojvodine. Novi Sad.
GSAD	Glasnik Srpskog Arheološkog Društva. Beograd.
HOMÉ	A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve. Miskolc.
HTRTÉ	Hunyadvármegye Történelmi és Régészeti Társulat Évkönyve. Déva (Deva).
JAMÉ	A nyíregyházi Jósza András Múzeum Évkönyve. Nyíregyháza.
JahrbuchRGZM	Jahrbuch des RömischGermanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz.
JAHA	Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology. Cluj-Napoca.
Lohanul	Lohanul. Revistă culturală științifică. Huși.
MCA	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice. București.
MCA-S.N.	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice-Serie Nouă. București.
MA / MemAnt	Memoria Antiquitatis. Piatra Neamț.
MFME	A Móra Ferenc Múz. Évkönyve. Szeged.
MFME StudArch	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve, <i>Studia Archaeologica</i> . Szeged.
MN / MuzNat	Muzeul Național. București.
NumAntCl	Numismatica e antichitàclassiche. Milano.
Opitz Archaeologica	Opitz Archaeologica. Budapest.
Opuscula Hungarica	Opuscula Hungarica. Budapest.
OM	Orbis Mediaevalis. Arad, Cluj-Napoca.
OTÉ	Orvos- Természettudományi Értesítő, a Kolozsvári Orvos-Természettudományi Társulat és az Erdélyi Múzeum-Egylet Természettudományi Szakosztálya.
Palaeohistorica	Acta et Communicationes Instituti Archaeologici Universitatis Groninganae.
PamArch	Památky Archeologické. Praha.
Past and Present	Past and Present. Oxford.
PIKS/PISC	Die Publikationen des Institutes für klassische Studien/ Publicațiile Institutului de studii clasice. Cluj-Napoca.
PBF	Praehistorische Bronzefunde. Berlin.
PMÉ	Acta Musei Papensis – Pápai Múzeumi Értesítő.
PZ	Prähistorische Zeitschrift. Berlin.

ReDIVA	Revista Doctoranzilor în Istorie Veche și Arheologie. Cluj-Napoca.
Revista Bistriței	Revista Bistriței. Bistrița.
RevMuz	Revista Muzeelor. București.
RIR	Revista Istorică Română.
RMM-MIA	Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor. Seria Monumente istorice și de artă. București.
RMMN	Revista Muzeului Militar Național. București.
RESEE	Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes. București.
Ruralia	Ruralia. Památky Archeologické – Supplementum. Praha.
RVM	Rad Vojvodjanskih Muzeja. Novi Sad.
Sargetia	Sargetia. Muzeul Civilizației Dacice și Romane, Deva.
Savaria	Savaria. A Vas megyei Múzeumok Értésítője. Szombathely.
SCIV(A)	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche. București.
SCN	Studii și Cercetări Numismatice. București.
SlovArch	Slovenská Archeológia. Nitra.
SIA	Studii de Istoria Artei. Cluj Napoca.
SIB	Studii de istorie a Banatului. Timișoara.
SKMÉ	A Szántó Kovács János Múzeum Évkönyve. Orosháza.
SMIM	Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie. București.
SMMA	Szolnok Megyei Múzeumi Adattár. Szolnok.
SMMIM	Studii și Materiale de Muzeografie și Istorie Militară. București.
Starinar	Starinar. Arheološki Institut. Beograd.
Stratum plus	Stratum plus. Archaeology and Cultural Anthropology. Kishinev.
StCl	Studii Clasice. București.
StComBrukenthal	Studii și comunicări. Sibiu.
StudArch	Studia Archaeologica. Budapest.
StudCom	Studia Comitatus. Szentendre.
Studii și Comunicări	Studii și Comunicări. Arad.
StudUnivCib	Studia Universitatis Cibiniensis. Sibiu.
StudCom – Vrancea	Studii și Comunicări. Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Etnografie Vrancea. Focșani.
StudŽvest	Študijne Zvesti Arheologického Ústavu Slovenskej Akademie Vied. Nitra.
Symp. Thrac.	Symposia Thracologica. București.
Századok	Századok. A Magyar Történelmi Társulat Folyóirata. Budapest.
TIR L34	D. Tudor, <i>Tabula Imperii Romani</i> . București 1965.
Tempora Obscura	Tempora Obscura. Békéscsaba 2012.
Tibiscus	Tibiscus. Timișoara.
VAH	Varia Archaeologica Hungarica. Budapest.
VIA	Visnik Institutu arkheolohii. L'viv.
Ziridava	Ziridava. Arad.
ZSA	Ziridava Studia Archaeologica. Arad.
w.a.	without author

